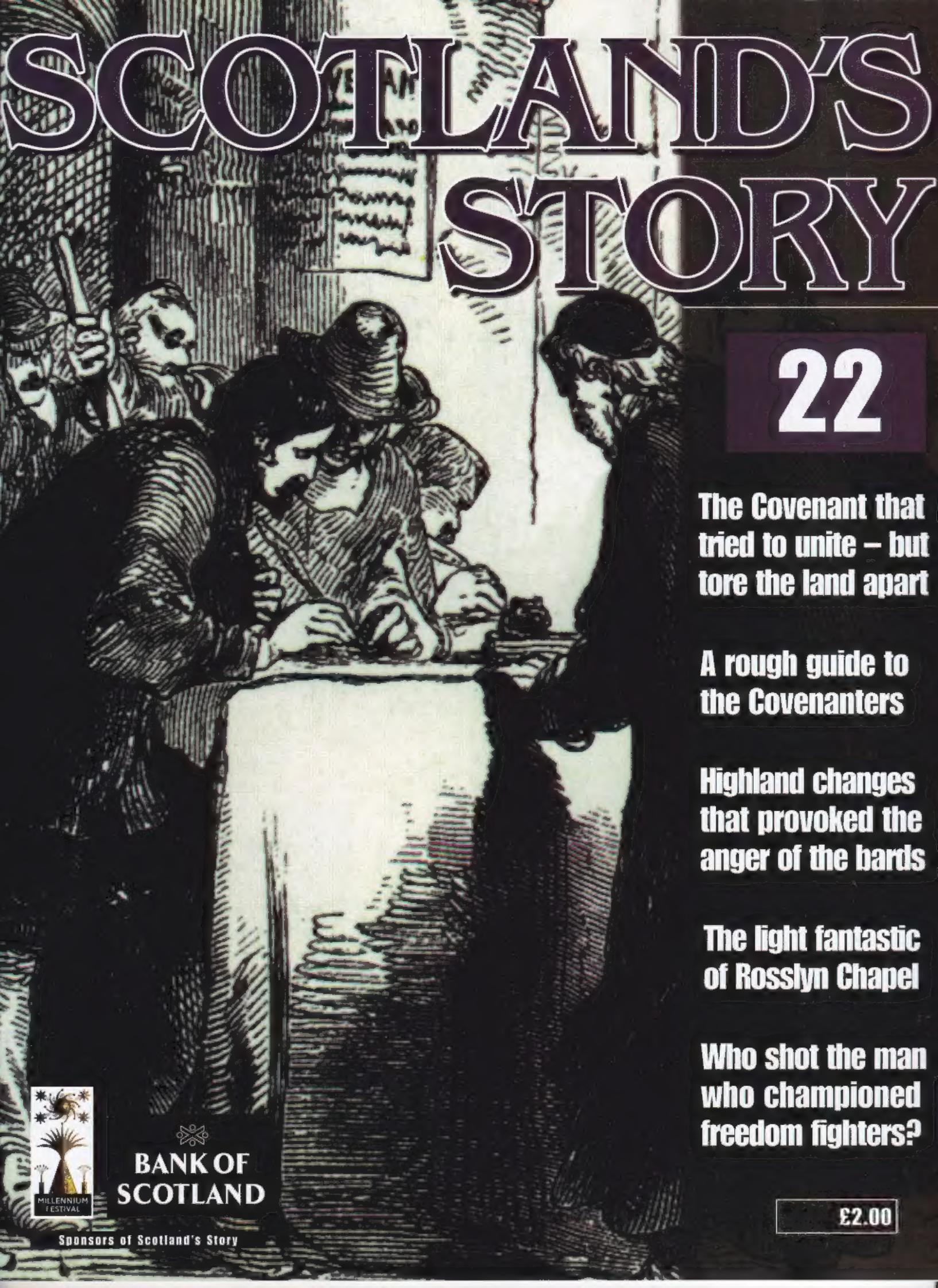


SCOTLAND'S STORY



22

The Covenant that tried to unite – but tore the land apart

A rough guide to the Covenanters

Highland changes that provoked the anger of the bards

The light fantastic of Rosslyn Chapel

Who shot the man who championed freedom fighters?



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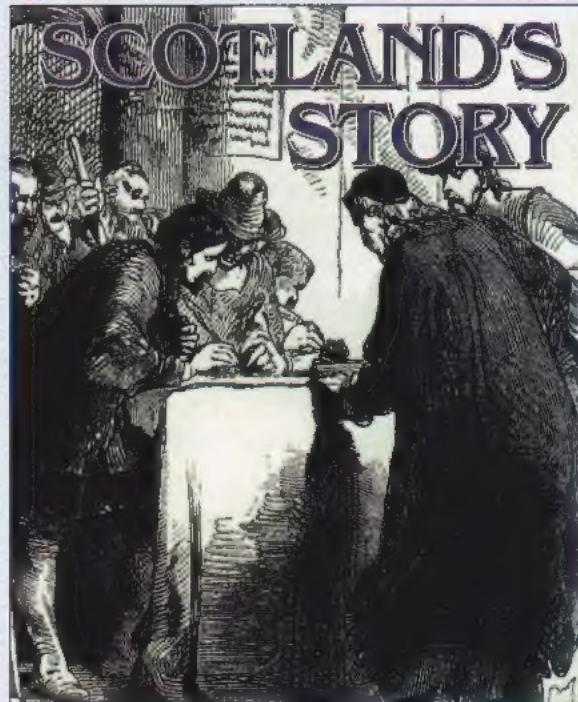
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COVER:
Scots queue to sign the National Covenant in Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh.

They were bound to upset the king

The Wars of the Covenant ostensibly came about because of resistance to Charles I's attempts to impose 'popish' practices on the Church. But behind that lay a deeper grievance - Charles's career-long crusade to force his personal will on the Church and nobility.

Historians argue about whether Charles's problems lay in the fact that he believed, as his father James VI had never done, in the ultimate god-given authority of kings.

Charles inherited many antagonisms that had already been provoked by his father, and it is a moot point whether or not James would have fared much better in later political circumstances.

It might be argued that the emergent crisis was due less to Charles's failings, and more to the increased political organisation of Presbyterianism - which was utterly opposed to the claim of the kingship to divine authority.

The ideologues of this new movement became known as the Covenanters. Their manifesto was a contract, or 'covenant', that bound its signatories to each other and to God. With such determined opposition, the

righteous Charles soon lost control of the situation.

Gaelic society in Scotland began to crumble in the 17th Century. But this development occurred not only because of destructive changes imposed from outside. Gaeldom was changing itself.

In its economy, traditional bonds and tributes were replaced by commercial agriculture. And landholding was no longer tied to territorial or kinship loyalty, but became based on rent payment.

These radical developments threatened society's central core, and those who wrought the changes found themselves castigated by the clan bards.

Rosslyn Chapel, near Edinburgh, is an architectural masterpiece that has numerous fantastic and wondrous associations. The most remarkable of these is the Chapel's link with the world's first photographic camera, the daguerreotype.

The camera's French inventor, Louis Daguerre, used his device to make a spectacular exhibition known as the Diorama of Rosslyn Chapel - receiving great acclaim at exhibitions in Paris and London between 1824-6.



■ The young Charles: he was untrained in the art of ruling – and showed it in his arrogant dealing with Scottish affairs. Top right (opposite): the gold ampulla that was used for his coronation in Scotland in 1633.

A COVENANT MADE TO UNMAKE A KING

The National Covenant was revolutionary – binding its signatories to each other as well as to God, over and above the King's will

Charles I was born in Dunfermline in 1600, but moved to England with his father less than three years later. As an absentee king of Scots, not an easy role for anyone to play, he lacked a proper grasp of how his northern kingdom worked.

Until his elder brother Henry died at 18 in 1612, Charles had no reason to believe he would ever be king. He was a good family man, and had an informed artistic taste. That's the case for the defence. In private, Charles might have been happy; as a king, he was a disaster.

An autocratic and stubborn ruler, he seems to have swallowed the propaganda line of his father, James VI, about the 'divine right of kings' in a way that James himself had

never done. And every time Charles provoked a crisis, he remained stubborn – and indecisive.

His Act of Revocation, passed on his accession to the throne in 1625, threatened a review of all grants of royal and church land over almost the past century. This may not have been as threatening in fact as the Scottish nobles took it to be, and Charles may have been cursed with inadequate spin doctors. But the nobles and lairds, the King's natural political allies, whom Charles's father James VI had gone out of his way to cultivate and conciliate, never trusted Charles again. If he listened to any political advice on Scotland, it would be that of his bishops, his own hand-picked men.

The nobles and lairds were the

people with sufficient political and social clout to cause their king real trouble. When he decided, in the 1630s, to remodel the Church of Scotland, the move provoked the Presbyterian party among the ministers. While they lacked, by themselves, the power to make real trouble, what they could supply was the ideology, the reasoned arguments, for use by nobles and lairds who felt Charles wasn't listening to them, ▶



■ What Jenny Geddes started. Opposition to Charles I's proposals inspired the legend of the stool-throwing at St Giles in Edinburgh.

■ Charles I opens parliament in 1625: the scene was set for a long conflict that would eventually lead to civil war.

The Covenanters might not have believed Charles meant to take the Kirk back to obedience to Rome, but leaving the suspicion hanging in the air would do their cause no harm

► and needed to be told as much.

In 1636 Charles issued a Book of Canons, a rule book for the Church of Scotland. It prescribed services with too much ceremonial for some Scottish tastes, and made no mention of the church courts, from the General Assembly downwards, the central feature of Scottish Presbyterianism, almost as if it was expected that they would wither away.

A new liturgy or service book for the Kirk was brought in next, being read in churches for the first time on 23 July 1637. Again there was too much ceremonial for some folk. But also – and here was where the landowners and ministers of religion could make common cause – the liturgy was brought in on the authority of the royal prerogative alone. Neither the General Assembly nor the Scottish Parliament was to be consulted.

When the liturgy was read at St Giles, Edinburgh, there was a riot. Whether or not a certain Jenny Geddes took part and how far the riot was the work of hyperactive people who enjoyed breaching the peace are interesting matters but not the most important ones. The King's supporters believed the riot was pre-arranged by the landowners, but even if that were not the case, the landowners knew how to turn the occasion to their advantage.

A committee known as the Tables – representing nobles, lairds, ministers and burgesses – was set up



in Edinburgh, prepared to receive petitions against current grievances. In 17th-century terms, this counted as a clear act of rebellion against royal authority. The Tables decided on 'the renewing of the old Covenant for religion'. This was a confession of faith signed by James VI and his court in 1581, binding them to uphold the Church of Scotland and to oppose 'popery and superstition'.

The Covenanters, as Charles I's opponents came to be called, might

not have believed that Charles really wished to take the Kirk back to obedience to Rome, but to leave the suspicion hanging in the air would do their cause no harm.

It was also felt that this Covenant should be brought up to date. The result was the National Covenant, produced in February 1638. Its authors were Alexander Henderson, the parish minister of Leuchars, a level-headed man, and Archibald Johnston of Warriston, a lawyer with a keen intellect but also a

Presbyterian zealot whose private diaries suggest that he was, as CV Wedgwood wrote, "walking on the dizzy verge of madness".

The National Covenant was first signed on 28 February in Greyfriars Kirk in Edinburgh – and not in the kirkyard, as came to be believed later. It probably did have broad popular support in Scotland, but the nobles and lairds were in charge of the movement, and they alone took part in the first select signing session, in comfort and warmth

Of God,

Of Man,

Of the Divell.



■ Seen as an evil imposition on the Scottish Church, bishops were satirised in 'The Triple Episcopie'.

indoors. Johnston of Warriston described the day of signing as "that glorious marriage day of the kingdom with God".

The Covenant reflects the various qualities of its authors – common sense, legal precision and deep religious conviction. It combined an apparently moderate stance that made it easier for people of most shades of opinion to sign it, with an underlying programme of forcing the King to reverse his changes in the Kirk, and recreating it in the form that the Presbyterians wanted.

Whereas the 1581 Covenant was between the individuals accepting

it and God, the 1638 Covenant bound the individuals who accepted it to each other, as well as God.

The Covenanters played down this aspect of their movement, so as to disguise its rebellious, indeed revolutionary, nature; but the implication was certainly there. The National Covenant pledged those signing it to defend 'the King's Majesty, His Person and Estate'.

But (and it's a big but) it also said that those signing would not accept the innovations in worship – the Book of Canons and the Liturgy – until they had been agreed to in free general assemblies and parliaments. And what the Covenanters meant by 'free' general assemblies and parliaments were ones that were stage-managed and fixed in advance – not as hitherto by the King and his government, but by Covenanters.

This is why Charles I wrote at the time: "So long as this Covenant is in force, I have no more Power in Scotland than as a Duke (i.e. Doge) of Venice, which I will die rather than suffer."

Copies of the Covenant were quickly sent round lowland Scotland to be signed. It seems to have met with little resistance except in the North-east. But the

organisers were taking no chances. In Ayrshire travellers were refused food and lodging until they had given assurance of being Covenanters. And the Presbytery of Kirkcaldy resolved that "no wilful non-Covenanters should be admitted to the Sacrament".

The National Covenant said nothing explicit about getting rid of bishops in the Church of Scotland. But even as the Covenant was being signed around Scotland, Johnston of Warriston was looking forward in his diary to "the utter overthrow and ruine of Episcopacie, that great grandmother of al our corruptions, innovations, usurpations, diseases and troubles".

For once, Charles I had got it right. The Scottish Revolution was under way, and his Scottish crown was on a shoogly nail.

When a general assembly met at Glasgow in November, 1638, it turned out to be as 'free' as the Covenanters could have wished.

Not only were the Book of Canons and Liturgy rejected, but the office of bishop was declared abolished. The assembly also declared that the next assembly would be held in Edinburgh in July, 1639.

Since James VI and Charles I had reserved to themselves the right to determine where and when, or indeed if at all, assemblies should meet, this was a clear attack on the royal prerogative. The breach between Charles I and his Scottish subjects was now complete. ●



■ Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh – the scene of Covenant's first signing session by the nobles.

TIMELINE

1625

Charles I begins his ill-fated campaign to impose on the church and nobility with the Act of Revocation.

1636

Scottish presbyterians are offended by Charles's church 'rule-book'.

1637

General Assembly and Scottish parliament are not consulted over new liturgy.

1638

Scots landowners sign National Covenant to force the King to reverse his changes to the Kirk.

1639

Covenanting army threatens Charles at Berwick. The Scottish parliament backs the Covenant.

1640

Army of 17,775 Covenanters defeat Charles's forces at Battle of Newburn.

1641

Charles witnesses the Scottish parliament further erode his royal power in Scotland.

1642

The English parliament's opposition to Charles sparks Civil War there.

1643

The Solemn League and Covenant is signed, seeking presbyterian unity across the British Isles.

1644

Royalist supporters of Charles defeated at Marston Moor, as civil wars loom in the three kingdoms.

AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SUPREME BEING

It was supposed to be a firm contract with God – you couldn't change your mind about the Covenant later

Nowadays, we usually think of a covenant in down-to-earth terms. One dictionary definition is "a mutual agreement between two or more persons to carry out or refrain from carrying out certain acts".

The 1611 King James translation of the Bible sometimes uses the word in this sense but in other places gives it a different slant. In Exodus 6:4, for example, God tells Moses: "I have established my covenant (with the Israelites) to give them the land of Canaan." The dictionary would define this as an example of "an agreement between the Supreme Being and another being or person".

Seventeenth-century Protestants were interested in what was called covenant theology, which stressed God's gift of grace to human beings, but also the response that God deserved in terms of people's lives and actions. And to Scottish Presbyterians that response included getting rid of bishops from the church, and as soon as possible.

It was widely believed that the Second Coming of Christ, and the end of the world, might be close at hand. John Napier of Merchiston even invented logarithms in order to date the Second Coming of Christ as precisely as possible.

To the 17th-century Scottish Presbyterians, Scotland was 'the bride of Christ', a 'sworn nation to the Lord'. The Scots, like the children of Israel, had been given a special mission in the world.

When the Presbyterians drew up a document of protest against the actions of King Charles's government in the spring of 1638, it was therefore no coincidence that they called it a covenant. They believed that God was a party to the transaction and they defined it as "a publick covenant of the collective bodie of the kingdom with God for God and the King".

The 1638 National Covenant said nothing explicit about abolishing bishops, but later it

came to be read in that sense. The 1643 Solemn League and Covenant, as far as the Scots were concerned, bound them to establish a Presbyterian church in England too.

At the Restoration in 1660, there was little chance that the government would set up a Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and absolutely no chance that there would be a Presbyterian church of England. Yet many Scots still felt bound by their adherence to the Covenants.

If you made a pact with God, you didn't readily later on tell God that, in changed circumstances, it was no longer politically expedient for you to strive to keep your part of

the bargain. This was put into words by John MacMillan, an 18th-century minister who had seceded from the Church of Scotland because, while it had become Presbyterian again in 1690, was not Covenanted.

In 1712 he stated the matter in stark terms: "One that has given up His Name to the Lord in Covenant, and called himself by the Name of Israel must not, like the Samaritans be an Israelite only in the time of Israel's prosperity, but he must be one in adversity too. The things engaged to in the Covenant being of an Everlasting and Permanent Duration in their Nature, must be lasting also in their Observation".



■ Protest document: one of the many examples of the National Covenant that still survive.

MAKING A CRISIS OUT OF TURMOIL

The revolution that was started by the National Covenant nearly turned society on its head

The National Covenant was one of the biggest events in Scottish History. Its signing in 1638 started a revolution that changed Scotland and ended in the near-destruction of British kingship.

The Covenant's problem was its ambiguously broad appeal. It left the question: what was it all about?

For the radical Presbyterian ministers it was a biblical vision that aimed to create nothing less than a new Israel right here in Scotland; an unbreakable promise made by the nation to God.

For many of the nobles it was a plea for sovereign power to be returned to Scotland. Eventually the Covenanters had to face up to its ambiguity and fell out.

The Marquis of Montrose was the first to break ranks, fearing that the Covenant was threatening to sweep away the natural pyramid of society with the King at the top. If that happened, what would happen to the nobles?

Noble doubts increased when in 1643 the Covenanted Parliament signed an alliance with the English Parliament, known as the Solemn League, in which they agreed to aid the English Parliament against Charles I in the English Civil War.

The army of the Covenant swung the balance of power against Charles I, so that by 1644 the King was facing defeat.

At that point, Montrose and his Highland allies rallied to the King and plunged Scotland into civil war.

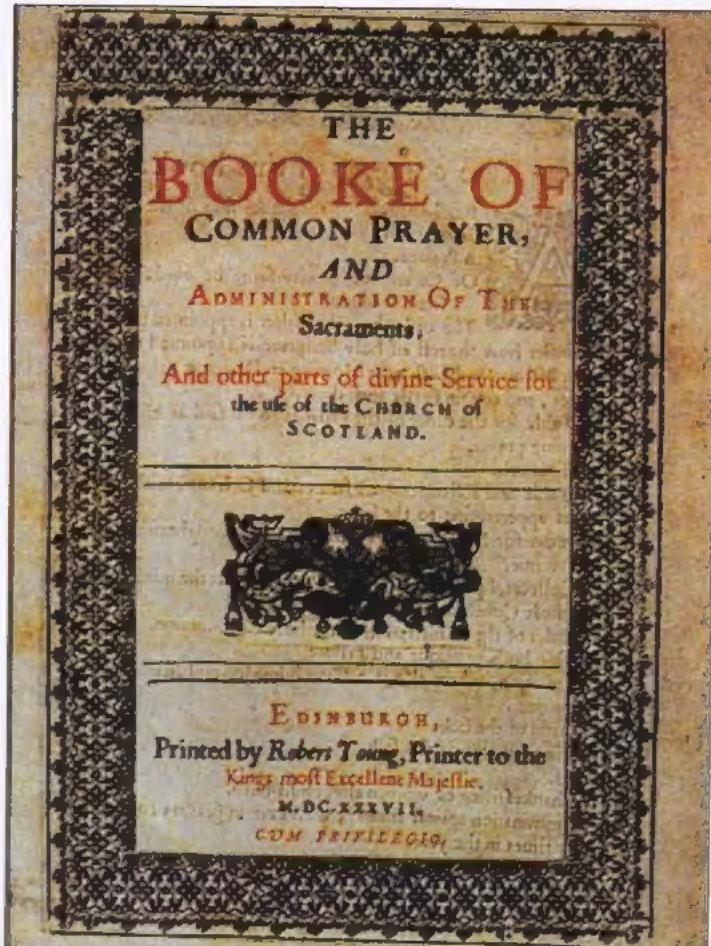
For a year they defeated army after army the Covenanters sent against them – before being brought to book at Philiphaugh, near Selkirk.

At Newcastle soon after, Charles surrendered to the Scots – who handed him over to the English Parliament and imprisonment.

The Engagement: In 1647 many Scottish nobles began to fear the direction of events, with the King imprisoned on the Isle of Wight. In what's known as 'The Engagement', they decided to fight to restore Charles I in England if he agreed to try out Presbyterianism there and gave them big rewards. It split the Covenant apart.

The radicals of the Presbyterian Kirk were furious that anyone should have anything to do with Charles I, who had tried to thwart them at every turn. Ministers preached to their congregations not to join the Engagers' army. Many didn't and during its invasion of England it was defeated by Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army.

The Rule of the Godly: With the Engagers defeated, the radical Presbyterians came to power. They set about creating their own Godly commonwealth. Noble sinners, like everyone else, were to sit on the repentance stool in kirk. Their power over the appointment of parish ministers was removed. To many Scots it seemed the natural order was turning upside-down. The turmoil turned to crisis in 1649, when Cromwell and the English Parliament executed Charles I. That



Charles tried to impose this Book of Prayer on the Scottish Church.

was too much for the Scots, even for radical Covenanters – for, despite his many faults, Charles was their Stewart king. The Scottish Parliament promptly appointed his son, Charles II, King of Scotland, England and Ireland on condition he accepted the conditions of the Covenant. With no options left, he was forced to agree.

Scotland Conquered: The Scots actions placed Cromwell's new republic in danger. In 1650 he reluctantly invaded Scotland and destroyed the army of the Covenant at Dunbar. His victory was seen as a sign of God's judgment and forced radicals from power. Pro-royalist nobles took over but fared no better and were annihilated by Cromwell too. Scotland was conquered.

Counter Revolution: After nine years of occupation, Cromwell's republic crumbled. What's known as the Restoration period (1660-88) began with the restoration of Charles II and Scotland's independence.

The Scottish nobles, virtually bankrupted in the Cromwellian occupation, began a counter-revolution to restore their fortunes. Rejecting religious revolution

and Covenants, the Kirk was to be kept under royal control with the reimposition of bishops and purging of 350 Presbyterian ministers for adhering to the Covenant.

But that went too far and divided lowland Scotland. Purged ministers held open-air field conventicles – subversive services – proclaiming their defiance of the Government. Thousands refused to go to church in a collective, passive challenge to the authorities.

The Government operated a carrot and stick policy attempting to bring the dissidents back into the Kirk. But the stick of hunting down the field preachers with troops only made things worse. Soon the Covenanters armed themselves and took on the government in a series of risings.

They were defeated and only the fanatical presbyterians – the Cameronians – remained outside the kirk. In what is known as the Killing Times, the government dealt with them by executing them on the spot. Relief only came for them with the arrival of William of Orange in 1688. But that brought a whole new set of problems. ■

CHALLENGING THE KING WITH STEEL



■ Alexander Leslie, who had fought in the Swedish army for 30 years, was commander of the Covenanting armies. He was later made Earl of Leven.

The Covenanting armies looked invincible as they backed their grievances against Charles I with force. But it wasn't to be so clean-cut, as the war for the three kingdoms began to loom

The rise in political tension in Scotland with the emergence of the Covenanters as a movement of opposition which sought to rectify the abuses in Charles I's administration of Scotland, was matched by an escalation of military activity as the King sought to embark on a military solution to crush the Covenanting 'rebels'.

He sought to harness his English and Irish resources to crush the Covenanters with an attack based on several fronts. A main attack from Berwick which would then head for Edinburgh; a naval operation in the Forth to deploy further troops; an invasion of Irish expeditionary forces on the western Lowlands and Highlands – where they would urge Royalist clans to attack the Campbell heartlands of Archibald Campbell, eighth Earl of Argyll and prominent figure in the Covenanting leadership; and a Royalist rising in Scotland's north-east.

But ambition did not match reality



■ The Solemn League and Covenant vowed England's Church would come into line with Scotland's. The Westminster Assembly was set up to achieve this.

and Charles seriously underestimated the strength of the Covenanting army which had been recruited as a national army from the Scottish localities and staffed by many soldiers and veterans who had served in the armies of the Thirty Years' War such as Alexander Leslie (future Earl of Leven) who was appointed as Commander in Chief of the Covenanting forces. Every able-bodied man aged between 16 and 60 was deemed to be available for military service, and levies from the shires were based on conscription.

While the King underestimated Covenanting military strength, he also overestimated the ability to raise troops in England and many people in England sympathised with the Covenanters' grievances. The King's grandiose plans failed to materialise and he could raise only 20,000 troops, roughly two thirds of what he had originally hoped for, and many of them were poorly trained.

Faced with a larger Covenanting army which had moved into Berwickshire in early June, 1639,

and camped at Duns Law, the King was forced to negotiate for peace. Sporadic Royalist fighting and resistance in April and May in the north east of Scotland was also suppressed by a separate Covenanting force under the command of James Graham, fifth Earl (and later first Marquis) of Montrose, with victory at the Brig o' Dee on June 19 and the occupation of Aberdeen.

The Pacification of Berwick of June 18, which ended the First Bishops' War, stated that a General Assembly and Parliament should be held in Scotland. The 1639 General Assembly ratified the proceedings of the 1638 Glasgow Assembly and the Parliament which met in Edinburgh in the autumn and winter of 1639 set in motion the political process of the Covenanting constitutional revolution.

The June, 1640, session of Parliament, which met in defiance of the King's wishes, increased the political powers of the Scottish Parliament at the expense of the

monarchy, and provided a constitutional model of reform for the political opposition to Charles I in England. In the summer of 1640, the Covenanters took the military initiative and advanced their troops towards the Border, aware that Charles was preparing a second assault and aware that they had many political and religious sympathisers in the propaganda war against Charles I.

The Second Bishops' War of 1640 was short-lived but effective. The Army of the Covenant, consisting of 17,775 foot and horse, crossed the Tweed on August 20, where it faced an inferior Royalist force of around 8,000 men, and on August 28 the Covenanters defeated the opposition at the Battle of Newburn resulting in the fall of Newcastle to the Covenanters.

Faced with military defeat in both the First and Second Bishops' Wars, an emerging political opposition in England and diplomatic negotiations relating to the presence and payment of the Covenanting army in England,

Charles was forced to come to Edinburgh in August, 1641 – his first trip north since 1633 – where he was to personally witness the further erosion of his powers as King of Scotland in the 1641 Scottish Parliament.

Two crucial developments in Ireland and England in 1641 and 1642, however, were to lead to Covenanting military commitments on a British basis by 1644, resulting in the war for the three kingdoms. Firstly, in October, 1641, Ulster exploded into a rebellion in which the Protestant communities were massacred by the native Irish Catholics (although the numbers killed were exaggerated). News of the rebellion reached Edinburgh on October 28 and the Covenanting response was to plan to send 10,000 troops to Ulster to help suppress the rebellion, although 11,371 men and officers had been sent to Ulster by November, 1642. Covenanting military aid was designed to help the Protestant cause, and it has been estimated that by 1641 there were ▶



■ Scene of the Covenant's first signing was Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh – and soon Scots in their thousands queued up there to add their signatures.

► 20,000 30 000 Scots in Ulster

The second development for Covenanting military commitment on a British basis was the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642 and the clash between Charles I and the English Parliament. The military might of the Covenanters was perceived by both sides as an important pawn which could swing the military balance in favour of either party in England, especially after the inconclusive Battle of Edgehill (the first battle of the English Civil War) on October 23, 1642.

Driven by a distrust of the king and a belief that he would once more attempt to suppress the Covenanters should he triumph in England, the radical wing of the Covenanting movement under the leadership of Archibald Campbell, eighth Earl and first Marquis of Argyll, aligned itself to the Parliamentarian cause in England in 1643.

A Convention of Estates, a 'mini Parliament' with fewer powers than a full Parliament, met on June 17, 1643. Under the political control of the radical Covenanting leadership which had marginalised moderate Covenanters as well as Royalists, a political decision was taken that the Covenanters should intervene in England to aid the cause of the English Parliament. This decision was not only based on the belief that the Covenanting revolution could only be secured by the defeat of the King, but it was also inspired by the

drive towards the settlement of religion on a British basis.

In short, presbyterianism was to be established in both England and Ireland. In terms of a British religious vision, the Solemn League and Covenant was agreed on between representatives of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Parliament and the English Parliament after the arrival of English commissioners in Edinburgh in August, 1643.

The 1643 Solemn League and Covenant sought to bring about the 'Reformation of Religion in the Kingdoms of England and Ireland, in Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government, according to the Word of God, and the example of the best

Reformed Churches' and sought to bring about religious unity on a British basis. However, the phrase 'according to the word of God' was included on the insistence of the English commissioners who did not want to commit themselves to a presbyterian model.

The Solemn League and Covenant was approved by the General Assembly and the Convention of Estates on August 17. The General Assembly also accepted an invitation from the English Parliamentarians to go to London and participate in the Westminster Assembly of Divines for a reformation of the Church of England along presbyterian lines. On

August 19 a delegation of five ministers (including Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie and Alexander Henderson) and three ruling elders (including Sir Archibald Johnston of Warriston) were appointed to go to London for this purpose. Yet, in the real world of 1643, the Solemn League and Covenant had been drawn up from two different perspectives – a point well recognised by Robert Baillie, the influential Covenanting minister from Kilwinning, Ayrshire.

Baillie noted that the Covenanters were for a 'religious league', while their English counterparts primarily sought a 'civil league'. The pragmatic

agreement to Covenanting demands over presbyterianism on a British basis was

therefore the price which had to be paid for Covenanting military support.

The negotiation of an Anglo-Scots parliamentary alliance, which would formally provide Covenanting military support to the English Parliament, went hand-in hand with the Solemn League and Covenant.

Negotiations began after the approval of the Solemn League and Covenant and a Treaty of Military Assistance was approved by the Convention on August 26, 1643.

The Scots were to be responsible for paying for the levying and arming of an invasion force, but these costs would be repaid by the

English Parliament at a future date when peace was restored. The English Parliament agreed to pay the Scots army £30,000 sterlins (£360,000 Scots) monthly and all salary arrears would be paid by Parliament when the war was over.

In addition, both sides agreed that they would not conclude peace without the consent of the other party and the English Parliament agreed to help the Covenanters if Scotland should be invaded.

The English Parliament also agreed to send ships to patrol the west coast of Scotland to help protect the country from an Irish invasion.

Following the approval of the Solemn League and Covenant and the Treaty of Military Assistance by the English Parliament, preparations for invasion took place in the winter of 1643. The Army of the Solemn League and Covenant – consisting of 18,000 foot, 3,000 horse and 500 600 dragoons crossed the Tweed into England on January 19, 1644.

While this was a large force, it was actually less than had been originally planned. Treaty commitments as ratified by the English Parliament had looked for 21,000 men, but orders issued by the Covenanters in September, 1643, indicate that they hoped to raise 32,000 foot and 2,720 horse

Covenanting forces were to play a key role in the fate of the North of England as a military zone of



David Leslie's cavalry proved too strong for royalist Cavaliers

Where the Covenanters helped tip the scales

In January, 1644, more than 20,000 Scottish troops crossed into England to fulfill the promise made when parliament agreed to the Solemn League and Covenant in the autumn of 1643.

The Duke of Newcastle, royalist commander in northern England was besieged in York by a united army of Scots and parliamentarians.

King Charles ordered his nephew, Prince Rupert, to relieve York. He skilfully surprised the besiegers by approaching from the north rather than the (expected) west. Having more less fulfilled his mission, however, he could not stop – and pursued the united army into battle. Advancing on their positions at Long Marston on July 2, Newcastle persuaded

tired for an immediate battle; so the action was delayed by a rest-day. A fatal error.

In the late evening, the 25,000-strong united army advanced confidently into action. Cromwell led the attack on the royalists' right and the weight of his Ironsides shattered the enemy cavalry. Rupert saw the situation was critical – he was outnumbered and in danger of having his flank turned.

In a heavy downpour, he audaciously led his cavalry reserve against the victorious Ironsides – but then ran into the Scots under David Leslie – a namesake of the veteran Covenanting general Alexander Leslie. They proved too tough for Rupert. Cavaliers and his horsemen were soon in

retreat. On their left flank, the royalists were managing to hold off the attacks of the parliamentarians; but the battle was to be decided by the action in the centre.

Here the parliamentary infantry, including a Scottish contingent, had advanced directly against the royalists. A cavalry charge, taking a curving route out from behind the royalist centre, halted them.

This stalemate in the centre meant the battle was still in the balance – and might have gone the royalists' way if they had had any reserves to throw into the fray.

In the event, the superior numbers of the parliamentarians and Scots tipped the scales – when Cromwell reorganised his forces and led them against the royalist infantry in the centre. It was the last straw for the royalists. Most fled, demoralised.

influence and action in the English Civil War. The Royalist commander in the North of England, the Duke of Newcastle, had been initially successful in slowing down the Scots army, but by April 22 York was besieged by an Anglo-Scottish parliamentary military force.

Given the strategic importance of the North, Prince Rupert, the King's nephew, was ordered to proceed from his base in Lancashire to relieve York – a move that resulted in the Battle of Marston Moor on July 2, 1644.

Covenanting troops played a leading role in the battle, in which the 25,000-strong parliamentarian

army faced Rupert's 20,000 troops. At two critical points in the battle, David Leslie's cavalry proved too strong for the Royalist cavaliers on the right of the battlefield, while Covenanting infantry were part of the parliamentary advance against Royalist forces in the centre of the battle. Covenanting military involvement on English soil had thus been effective at Marston Moor.

A further 6,800-8,000 troops entered England under the command of James Livingston, first Earl of Callendar, in June, 1644, to help recover strongholds which had been recaptured by Royalists. While the

Covenanters now had substantial military commitments in England and Ireland, the military skills and brinkmanship of James Graham, fifth Earl and first Marquis of Montrose, over the next two years were to shatter the image of the invincibility of the Covenanting armed forces and test the backbone of the Covenanting administration in Scotland.

Originally one of the leading Covenanters at the outset of the Scottish troubles, Montrose had become increasingly alienated by the move towards political radicalism and the restriction of the King's powers in 1640-41. By 1644

Montrose had emerged as the main Royalist hope in Scotland, and an agreement with Randal MacDonnell, second earl and later first Marquis of Antrim, sanctioned by the king himself, allowed for an Irish Catholic expeditionary force to be sent to Scotland to help fight the King's cause and attack the Campbell heartlands.

The drive towards political radicalism in Scotland and military intervention in England was thus to result in Royalist rebellion in Scotland, in which Irish Catholic troops were to play a prominent role. The war for the three kingdoms had now begun in earnest. ■

'Distracted subject of a distracted time'



A presbyterian aristocrat and leader of the Covenanting revolution, the eighth Earl of Argyll lived dangerously in a time of grim turmoil

The Campbells had a saying, "It's a far cry to Loch Awe" a reference to the remoteness of their clan's heartland. But throughout the 17th century they occupied the centre stage of Scottish politics

Gilleasbug Gruamach, seventh earl and hunter of MacGregors and MacDonalds on behalf of James VI, almost wrecked the fortunes of his clan when he converted to catholicism and departed for Spain

All the branches of the great Clan Campbell, the most successful clan in Scottish history and thus the most detested, rallied to hold the kindred together in the name of Gilleasbug's son, Archibald, the eighth earl who was brought up a strict presbyterian and became the leader of the Covenanting party in 1638.

Created a Marquis by Charles I in

a vain attempt to buy him off, he suffered several humiliating defeats at the hands of Montrose but was revered as a saint of the Covenant when he was executed on the orders of Charles II in 1661

Argyll was the consummate aristocrat who was reluctantly led into rebellion because he believed that "popular furies would never have end if not overawed by their superiors". He was a clever politician whose way lay through the shadows of intrigue and opportunism. At the end of his life he described himself as "a distracted man, a distracted subject, of a distracted time wherein I lived", and thus composed the epitaph of an entire generation

The Campbells had risen to power as Crown agents in the south west Highlands. By 1629 when Archibald, the future ninth earl was born – they

held vast quantities of land and monopolised a number of jurisdictions which gave them colossal influence through the entire Gaidhealtachd from Kintyre to Caithness.

It has been said that because they were so heavily involved in central government they were somehow less Gaelic, but such a view is misleading, for they remained true to its roots and the Campbell clan heritage

The MacFwens, hereditary bards to Clan Campbell, compared the marquis favourably with Arthur and Hector, one who combined the finest traits of both Caesar and Pompey. "He is a lion that leaps over every house, he is a lord who defends the faith; in Scotland's land he is a pillar of lords, whose fame is high within the church". These words are sadly ironic, given Archibald's pathetic military record.

When he took to his galley at the



■ Morning of his execution. The Last Sleep of the Earl of Argyll by E M Ward shows the doomed Archibald Campbell about to be awakened on May 27, 1661.

battle of Inverlochy in 1645, leaving his followers to be massacred, the widow of Campbell of Glen Fochain composed a devastating Gaelic lament which condemned Argyll for the destruction of the clan whose custodian he was supposed to be. She lost in the battle a father, husband, three sons, four brothers and nine foster brothers – "Great MacCaleum took himself off to sea, and he let this stroke fall on his kin".

Great care was taken to ensure that young Archie was brought up in the ways of his ancestors. He was fostered, according to the custom of the Gael, by Campbell of Glenorchy. Fosterage was one of the means by which clan bonds were cemented. A letter written when Archibald was eight years old told his fosterfather: "I long veri much to sie yow!" Such attachments were for life. Later, Archie would tell

Glenorchy: "I had many good stories to tell you over a four hour drink".

But the boy was not enthusiastic about his Gaelic lessons. His mother heard rumours that he was not applying himself as he should. "I hear my son begins to weary of the Irish language," she wrote. "I entreat you to cause hold him to the speaking of it for, since he has bestowed so long time in the getting of it, I should be sorry he lost it now for laziness in not speaking of it."

During the upheavals and calamities of the civil war Archibald moved between Inverary and Edinburgh. In 1642 he was sent to Glasgow University where it was noted that he winked when he spoke, which, together with other fidgety behaviour, was taken to be "prophetic of a violent death".

As Argyll began to lose his grip on the affairs of state, disagreements between father and son became apparent. Archie, for example, fought against the Cromwellians at what Thomas Carlyle described as "the brunt or essential agony of the battle of Dunbar" in 1650 – when the Gideon's army of the Covenant was smashed on the slopes of Doon Hill.

When Argyll colluded with Cromwell's regime, Archie made a point of adopting a royalist position, joining Glencairn's half-hearted rising on behalf of Charles II in 1654.

The differences between father and son were almost more apparent than real and perhaps a ploy to ensure the preservation of clan lands, whatever the outcome of the struggle between Cavaliers and Roundheads. Their disagreements were so well reported that deliberate orchestration must be suspected. Around this time, Archie suffered a skull fracture which was operated upon. Contemporaries muttered darkly that afterwards he was never the same again.

Charles II did not forget young Archie's support for Glencairn. When Argyll was executed, the Campbell estates were forfeited but returned within a few years. There is little evidence that the ninth earl was a deeply committed person. Like many contemporaries, he appears to have been content just to survive in the dismal Restoration era, but his acquisitive genes led him to expand his empire at the expense of neighbouring clans, notably the hapless Macleans.

In 1681, however, Archibald tangled with James, Duke of York, brother of Charles II. He could abide neither the man nor his Catholic faith and when office-holders were compelled to accept the Test Act, he objected.

Eventually, he declared that he



■ Determination on Argyll's face, painted by David Scougall.

would adopt it only in so far as it was consistent with itself.

York chose to treat his action as treason and Campbell was sentenced to death though he escaped to The Netherlands. The whole episode remains puzzling and reeks of a set up. One suggestion is that by appearing to tackle Argyll, York hoped to win the support of those clans who opposed the Campbells but it seems unlikely that the execution would ever have gone ahead. This bizarre episode seems to have been the making of Argyll but he had now found a cause which would bring about his end.

In 1685, when James VII succeeded Charles II, there were many who feared that the Catholic Counter Reformation was about to engulf the British Isles. The Duke of Monmouth invaded the south-west of England while Argyll landed in the west of Scotland. Both expeditions quickly came to grief; both were hopelessly misconceived, mismanaged and inadequately supplied. Argyll was captured and taken to Edinburgh where this time there was to be no play acting or subterfuge.

The 'Maiden' awaited him. Argyll did not disappoint the theatrical anticipation which accompanied beheadings. People expected a show and got one. The block on which he laid his head was uneven. Argyll took

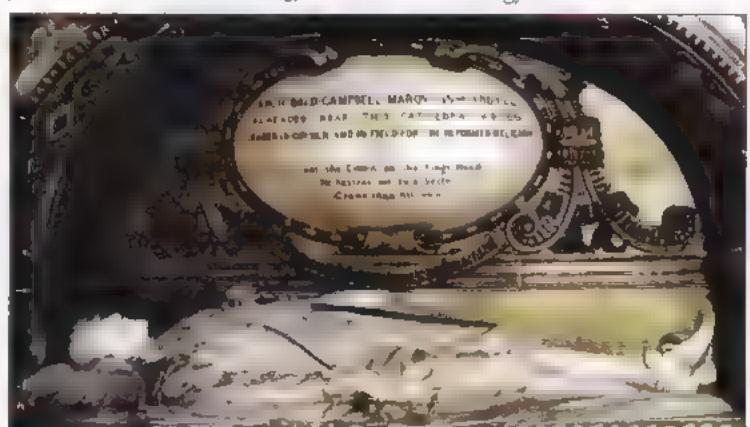


■ Edinburgh's Canongate Tolbooth where Argyll's head was 'spiked'.

a rule out of his pocket, measured it, then ordered a carpenter to fix the defect before proceedings continued. This was Argyll's finest hour. On the scaffold he proclaimed: "I die not only a Protestant, but with a heart hatred of popery, prelacy and all superstition whatsoever".

There survives in the muniments at Inverary Castle a remarkable memorandum of 1686 protesting about the proposed abolition of the surname Campbell following the execution for treason of the ninth earl. Most speciously the petitioners claim that although a chief was often deemed to be responsible for the faults of his clan, it had never been the case that the clan should be "made liable or obnoxious for the crimes of their chief", a neat inversion of what most might have argued at the time. And it paid off. The Campbells, after all, were the great survivors of Scottish history.

The name was preserved, the estates were returned and the ninth earl's son grew up to become the first Duke of Argyll.



■ The last resting place of the Covenanting earl – in the High Kirk of St Giles.

How peace helped in the grand design

With the exception of the extraordinary, square, centrally planned church in Burntisland built in 1592, Scottish Renaissance architecture was little affected by the Reformation in 1560. It was influenced much more by social change, the habits of monarchs and lifestyles of the élite.

The marriage of James IV to Margaret Tudor had coincided with the expansion of the royal palaces into courtyards for ease and convenience. In striking contrast to the earlier, self-contained royal lodgings with separate great hall and chapel, these fashionable, low, usually two-storeyed buildings contained grand apartments in sequence of rank and hierarchy.

The symbol of nobility, in particular, was the dominating, taller, heraldic, round-towered building such as the new entrance to Stirling, dated 1509, the royal lodgings at Holyrood in 1529, and the transformation of an existing tower at Falkland a few years later.

For the remainder of the Renaissance in Scotland, change was most distinctive in the Scottish country house, which broke out of its inherited straitjacket of the thick-walled, vertically planned 15th-century tower. In its place emerged the wild exuberance of Scottish Renaissance architecture, which eventually came to be characterised as 'Scotland's most national period'.

Houses were horizontally planned so that chambers opened one into the next in a route of increasing privacy - ante-chamber or hall, chamber and, eventually, bedchamber. The most splendid example of this arrangement was the new Royal Lodgings in Stirling Castle, designed, funded and built 1538-40 by Sir James Hamilton of Finnart.

So all the bedrooms, closets and staircases that had been compressed



■ The plain plinth capped by a wildly romantic superstructure reached its finest expression in houses like Craigievar.

The Renaissance architecture of Scotland's noble old houses was hardly affected by the Reformation. Indeed, having shed their inherited 15th-century straitjacket, they kept on flowering into the 17th century

within the wall-thickness of the pure, rectangular forms of the old towers, now bloomed on the exterior. Indeed, where the dominating expression of nobility was not a drum-towered entrance - as in Dudhope, Dundee, or Seton, East Lothian - it was the enormous, pinnacled, round bedroom tower, as in the Palace of Huntly (Gordon), the Atholl Lodging at Balvenie Castle



■ Earlshall: example of the form in which a principal lodging block with staitower takes one corner, while a dominant bedroom tower is opposite.

(Moray), or even wee Craigcrook, Edinburgh. Combined with the turrets, finials, chimney stacks, dormer windows, statues, viewing platforms and belvederes, they created the untamed, romantic form and skyline so characteristic of Scots renaissance architecture long after their European counterparts were framed and tamed by classicism.

A wide public staircase – initially circular, and later square (or scale-and-platt) – would take visitors up to the principal chambers on the first floor, or piano nobile.

Ground floor comprised cellars, wine cellar and kitchen. The second floor might well be the wife's floor, organised in similar processional form to the one below. Save in the north east of Scotland, where there was a fondness for locating the gallery (an indoor exercise room, sometimes used for judicial purposes) on the top, the attics generally housed the remaining household.

As the period became more formal, certainly by the turn of the 17th century, the public stair became grander, but led to the first floor only. Access upstairs would be in much smaller and obviously private staircases – unless there was a viewing platform to be

enjoyed. Up to 1540, the principal change to the Medieval tower had been that it had become lower and fatter, and was sometimes ringed with gardens, parterres, orchards and yards laid out in formal axis, as was the case in Finnart's own villa of Craignethan, Clydesdale.

Sometimes – perhaps in imitation of the four-towered Linlithgow – they were flanked by square towers, as was the case, certainly, in Craignethan, Blairquhan and possibly

The Binns. Radical change became more apparent between 1538 and 1570, when the country was influenced by two French-educated queens – Mary of Guise and her daughter, Mary, Queen of Scots.

Owing much to French country châteaux, Scottish country houses took on their most romantic form of a principal lodging block (or *corps de logis*) with a staitower projecting from one corner, and the much more dominant bedroom

tower projecting from the opposite corner. The bedroom tower would often have its own private stair. Good examples were Claypotts (never finished as intended), Earlshall, Fernie, Midmar and Pitcaple.

These country houses might also have deserved the term 'châteaux' for they were rarely castles, and capable of little serious defence – even if had ever been required of them.

Apart from occasional feuds, which seemed mostly to be played out in the High Streets of Scottish cities, Scotland was a largely peaceable country.

Since there was little need for real defence, the skylines of these houses were decorated, instead, with the insignia of martial nobility: decorative battlements and

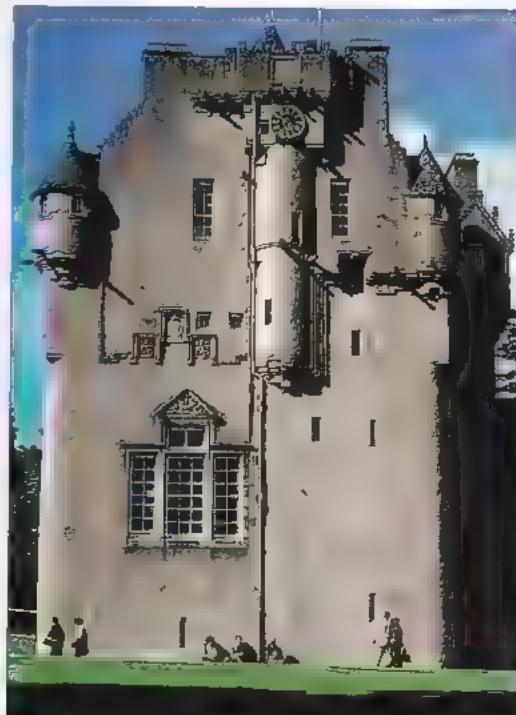
turrets as gazebos. They were mock military houses built – as an English visitor noted, "all castle-wise". Walls constructed of rubble would have been harled (a lime-based coating) to give the appearance of solid mass, the harling coloured either by the local sand or imported pigment. The lower floors remained generally plain, to support and act as a counterfoil to the increasingly elaborate heraldic superstructures.

Dressed, polished or carved stone would stand out against the harling, and some carvings were probably painted. The concept of a plain plinth capped by a wild superstructure was to reach its finest expression in the 17th century with the almost baroque extravagances of Craigievar, Crathes, Castle Fraser, Craigston and Glamis.

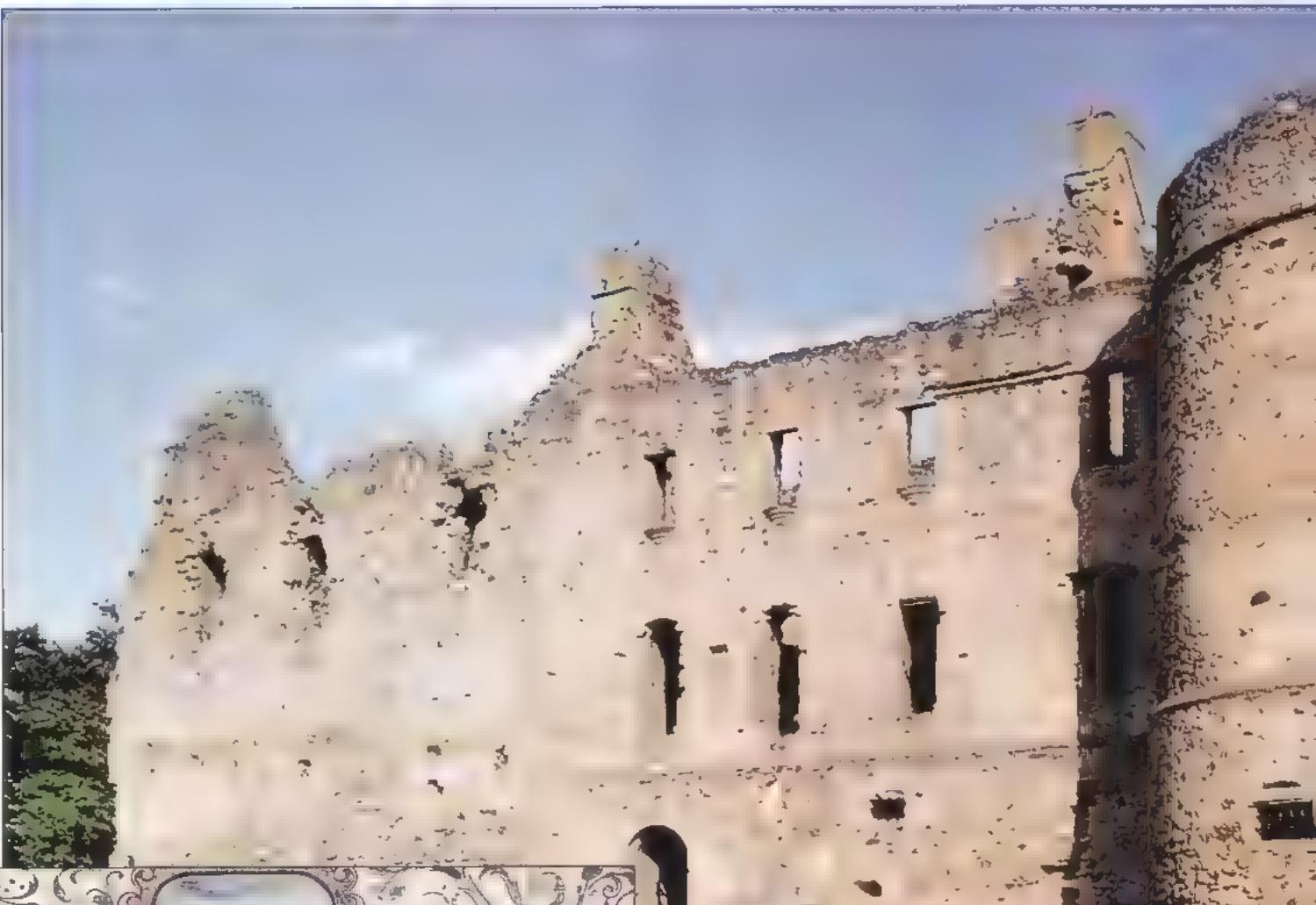
They all represented a reworking and regularising of a heterogeneous architectural inheritance of buildings of different heights.

The mid-century Francophile extravagances gradually ceded to sobriety as the French influence subsided, save in north-east Scotland. The plan of the country houses became increasingly sophisticated – it is almost certain that a top-floor room in Glenbuchat was a form of bathroom taking rainwater from the roofs – but the expression was plainer as round towers gave way to square ones.

Good examples of this period are Kellie (Fife), Hatton (Angus), Elcho and Menzies (originally Weem) in



■ Crathes: reworking of an architectural inheritance.



■ Expression of nobility: Balvenie Castle with its round bedroom tower.

► Perthshire. The wide public stair led to the public apartments, in sequence, on the first floor. However, these houses are all characterised by a multiplicity of staircases and small towers. The far tower was becoming the laird's (or family's) tower, sometimes with more than one room. Intermediate towers – or the wing/tower above the entrance stair – might have been guest towers. (It was a guest tower that was burnt with its occupants at Frendraught, not the entire house).

These plainer houses did not eschew carvings and skylines; indeed, they added to them with viewing platforms, balconies, cupolas and decorated chimneys. In some houses, the heraldic decoration once provided by battlements was provided instead by alternating

decorative chimney stacks and dormer windows – notably in the gallery wings at Dunnottar, Pinkie and in Newark, Port Glasgow.

The final phase of the Scottish Renaissance country house – joined by the urban villa – may reflect the influence of James VI's wife Anne of Denmark. The European tendencies of the Scots of the time were emphasised by the similarities between, for example, George Heriot's Hospital, Edinburgh, and the Rosenberg Palace, Copenhagen; the Palace of Kronborg, Helsingfors, and King's College Aberdeen, and the new houses built in Glasgow to those in Lübeck. Window details in Edinburgh's Tron Kirk have their counterparts in the Elector's palace of Heidelberg; and the rebuilding of Linlithgow Palace in 1617 with its octagonal staircase resembles that of the royal castle of Kolding, Denmark. Scotland's perennial advantage was the availability of

■ A hint – from a painted ceiling – of the ornate and elegant interior of Pinkie House, Musselburgh.



■ An almost-baroque 17th-century extravagance: spectacular Glamis Castle in Angus – without the harling.

Most of these buildings have turrets, gazebos and viewing platforms for gazing down on the cultivation yards

tolbooths, Glasgow's was by far the most splendid.

Great houses and urban villas alike were becoming rationalised, to an approximate U-plan, of a common height. That was the form of the new blocks added to Cowdenknowes and Drum, and likewise the form of the grander aristocratic town houses or hotels in the principal cities of the realm. Only a few survive, the best examples being the Argyll Lodging in Stirling and Acheson House in Edinburgh's Canongate.

The interior of the Scottish Renaissance country house was highly decorative. During the 16th century, walls and ceilings would generally be vividly painted with symbolic or mythological scenes, although improving moralising texts became quite fashionable as the century wore down. Perhaps the finest survivor is the emblematic painted ceiling of the Long Gallery at Pinkie House, created for Lord Chancellor Alexander Seton, Earl of Dunfermline.

Heavily plastered ceilings became fashionable from 1617, when the same moulds can be tracked from Kellie to Winton, The Binns, Culross and the palace in Edinburgh Castle. Painted ceilings

and walls remained common elsewhere. About the same time, the ground floor of cellars began to give way to a 'Laigh' Hall – in Culross Abbey House in 1608, The Binns in 1622, and the extraordinarily decorated one at Auchterhouse for the Earl of Buchan in 1633. In each case, there had been some link between the owner and the King's departure to England, and they remained the exception.

Many Scots country houses reflected varying periods in which they had been built – extended from an old tower by a new 'chateau' block, perhaps with an added gallery, eventually into an entire courtyard – a 'place' or 'palace'. The varying dates and ages were sometimes kept like that for filial piety, each generation adding its new bit. Pitshill, for example, has all these phases of building including a smart new 1603 staircase.

In the early 17th century, however, more ambitious ideas emerged to rework this varying inheritance into a single building form and single coherent image representing the high point of Scottish Renaissance architecture. The buildings included Fyvie, possibly transformed into its

heraldic magnificence in 1596 by William Schaw of Sauchie; Castle Fraser, reworked by Ian Bell just a few years later; Craigston, Craigievar and Crathes – with Glamis – reworked a few decades later again.

In these buildings, the distinction between plain harled plinth (harling removed at Glamis) and the romantic superstructure is marked by an extravagant corbel course. Most of these buildings have turrets, gazebos, viewing platforms at sky level, from which visitors could gaze down on the industry of cultivation in the yards – the herb yard, the flower yard, the orchard, the fruit yard, the grass yard, the parterres, the vegetable yard and the artificial wildernesses which surrounded these great houses at ground level.

Perhaps a fitting end is the plan of Sir Robert Innes of Innes to rework his tower, palace-block and ancillary buildings between 1639 and 1644 to a plan devised by William Ayton of Edinburgh. Height in that part of the country must still have been considered a prerequisite of nobility. An imposing processional staircase was added in the angle and taken up six storeys to end in a balustraded platform with a view from the sea to Ben Rhinnes. The tower's battlements were removed, and parts levelled up and parts levelled down. It provides an excellent picture of Scottish architectural attitudes applied to a landed seat of the mid 17th century. ■

excellent, cheap stone. Tenements were being refashioned to face the street, often clothed in ashlar, with arched booths or shops on the ground floor.

Although examples survive only in Edinburgh (Gladstone's Land) and Elgin, these arched buildings or lands were normal: Glasgow was rebuilt almost entirely this way in 1652, and there were examples in Dundee, Portsoy, Aberdeen and Linlithgow.

The early 17th century brought a number of new public buildings, the lead probably being given by the King's architect Sir James Murray of Kilbaberian in the Palace in Edinburgh Castle, 1617, and the Parliament House beside St Giles in 1633. There was much building. Edinburgh University added a courtyard with an entrance tower, Glasgow University was rebuilt in 1636 into a double-courtyard complex, and of the number of new

Farewell to chiefs

■ A photograph from the 17th century – almost. Taken in the 1930s, this picture of the 'baile' or township of Smearysary in Moidart shows a scene virtually unchanged over the centuries.



hello to landlords

The clan bards were not pleased. Big changes in the 17th-century Highland way of life could be subtle – but all were profound

On the Isle of Skye at the opening of the 17th century, Donald Gorm Mor, chief of the MacDonalds, had entered into a handfast marriage with the sister of Rory Mor, chief of the MacLeods. When his 'trial' wife sustained an injury to her eye, Donald lost his enthusiasm. At the end of the trial year he sent her back – on a one-eyed old horse, with a one-eyed servant and a one-eyed mongrel dog – secured a divorce and married the sister of MacKenzie of Kintail, Rory Mor's arch enemy.

The combined insults sparked off the bitter clan feud known as *Cogadh na Cailliche Caim*, 'The War of the One-eyed Woman'.

In 1601 a party of MacLeods raided the MacDonald lands in Carinush, North Uist. The inhabitants took shelter in the local church while the MacLeods despoiled the island then rested. Word of the attack on his kinsmen reached Dòmhnull Mac Iain Mhic Sheumais, the renowned warrior-athlete of the MacDonalds, then living on Eriskay. Gathering support on his way, Donald and his bowmen launched a surprise attack on the MacLeods, slaughtering many until Donald himself was wounded with a barbed arrow in the thigh.

He was carried to a nearby house where Nic Còiseam, his foster-mother, withdrew the arrow. To distract Donald and drown his cries of pain, she composed a song to Donald, singing it with her women helpers:

*Your noble body's blood
lay on the surface of the ground
I sucked it up
till my breath grew husky*

Within weeks, Donald had recovered sufficiently to take a leading part in another successful skirmish with the MacLeods at Coire na Creiche, the 'Corry of the Foray', the corry high in the Skye Cuillin where the MacDonalds had taken the plundered MacLeod cattle.

It was the last clan battle on Skye. Shortly after, the MacDonalds and MacLeods made peace and Domhnall Mac Iain Mhic Sheumais retired as a warrior-hero.

The story highlights several features of a clan society shaped by the era of 'linn nan creach', or the age of forays. It is a tale of kinship loyalties, defence of territory, upholding clan status and honour, celebrating warrior values and military prowess. The clans were emerging from the period when feuds and territorial rivalries had filled the

vacuum caused by the collapse of the Lordship of the Isles and the Earldom of Ross, still geared for military activity. Deep involvement in the wider dynastic struggles of the 17th century gave ample opportunity for the clan bards – Iain Lom and Siuis na Ceapaich of the MacDonalds, Máiri nighean Alasdair Ruadh of the MacLeods, Eachan Mabach of the MacLeans – to praise the warrior prowess of individual chiefs and castles. And to indulge in a collective, shared triumphalism as they celebrated the achievements of the clan and its kinship allies as a testimony to Gaelic superiority on a grand canvas.

The superb song-poetry of these 17th century bards – and there were some 50 or so across the Highlands – give an insight into a kinship order where traditional values and practices prevailed and were regularly celebrated by feasting, drinking, story-telling, gaming, song and music in the great hall of the chief. He was the apex, focus and embodiment of the clan, the land, the entire social order of Gaeldom.

But the panegyrics, elegies, eulogies of the bards also have an illusory quality in their formulaic imagery. For the social order depicted in convenient shorthand as 'the Highland clans' was not a static but an evolving and sophisticated social formation, with its own internal dynamic of change. Well adapted to its locality, successful in its own reproduction, variegated in its differing forms, clanship worked – and worked well.

From the frontier zones of Lennox, Atholl and Moray through the mountain heartlands of Lochaber, Glengarry and Kintail to the northern outposts of Sutherland and the maritime provinces of the Argyll islands and the Hebrides, a common Gaelic culture was refracted through a diversity of clanship forms and relationships. And the cultural dimension was crucial within a structure where the cultural, social and economic aspects were inextricably linked.

Gaeldom existed, of course, within a wider Scottish context. The articulation of this Gaelic society with the encapsulating social order of an emergent mercantile capitalism was a complex, often contradictory process of confrontation and alliance. Indeed, the narrative of events from the 'civilising' policies of the opening decades to the split allegiances and alignments of the 1690s graphically illustrates the extent and intricacy of the Gaelic order's voluntary and involuntary ►





■ Mountain heartland: the ruins of Invergarry Castle – one-time headquarters of Angus MacDonald, the clan chief of the MacDonalds of Glengarry.

Wealth and status were measured in cattle – from the bride's dowry to rent for the clan chieftain

► interaction with the wider Scottish (and European) polity.

This relationship was important. But of no less importance was the dynamic of change within Gaeldom. It was this internal process, most notably the self-redefinition of role and relation to the wider kinship by the chiefs, which enabled a wider mercantilism to actually reinforce clan society in the short term, allowing for its subordination and eventual eclipse over the longer period.

The episode of 'The War of the One-Eyed Woman' contains several elements of an earlier Gaeldom within its motifs.

The handfast marriage as exchange of women between chiefs of equal rank; the warrior class, a redundant elite in the early 17th century, personified by the summoned Dòmhnaill Mac Iain

Mhic Sheumais; the help to kin and kinship in a crisis, symbolised by the foster mother (and the foster son who figures elsewhere in the tale); the band of women who sang the improvised praise of the wounded Donald, reflective of the implicit role of women and containing within its verse an even older motif of love and bonding (drinking blood).

But even as this episode came to an end, the values and relationships it reflected were changing.

And as the clanship emerged from the dislocation of the mid-century Civil Wars, the reverberations of the Marquis of Montrose campaigns and the English occupation under Oliver Cromwell, the reorientation intensified.

The chiefs were redefining their role, their relationships, the essential purpose of clanship itself. It was a far-reaching process, taking different forms.

At its corrosive core were changing notions of what clan lands meant, what they were for – shifting redefinitions of cain, which changed from tribute as a bond to rent as a payment.

Opting for a wider role, attracted by alternative ideas of status in which the chief was an individual, not a kinship representative, the leader of the clan became a landlord, a lord of the realm, a loan-borrower from whoever could be tapped. Absenteeism intensified.

Debts mounted to a ruinous degree. The bards expressed disapproval. Iam Lom castigated Angus

MacDonald, chief of Glengarry, with this verse:

*You seemed to me to be a long time in Easay
being ruined by gaming
I would prefer you in a coat of arms
than in a cloak which has no
and that you should walk in a sprightly manner
in trews made
and visit for a*

But Glengarry was deaf to the fiery bard's strictures. He restored himself Aeneas MacDonald, Lord MacDonald and Aros and continued his life as an absentee courtier in Restoration Edinburgh, his clan lands – now an 'estate' – encumbered by debts incurred by the profligate expenditure of his new, chosen lifestyle.

The productive base of the clan social order, however, remained unchanged. At its heart was the baile, or 'township', the cluster of family dwellings from which the community practised grain cropping on the inbye and pastoral stock-rearing on attached hill ground. Wealth and status were still measured in cattle, from the bride's dowry to the chieftain's rent. By the later 17th century it was a subsistence economy crucially buttressed by trade with the wider, encapsulating mercantile economy of the Lowlands. And the basic trade was in black cattle. It was an exchange which initially reinforced clanship and kept the chiefs afloat, but which ultimately was to transform Gaeldom.

Ironically, this process whereby commercialism 'took root' through the cattle trade, this



■ The broken lines of the ruins of Urquhart Castle, overlooking the expanse of Loch Ness, aptly illustrates the dramatic grandeur of the Highlands .

irreversible internal shift within clanship was exemplified by the remarkable 'career change' of Domhnal Mac Iain Mhic Sheumais, the warrior-hero. Of high MacDonald lineage, married to a daughter of the chief of the MacDonalds of Keppoch and renowned as a living legend, the subject of many stories, the great man's contribution went unrewarded and unnoticed by the new-style chiefs of MacDonald

Donald left Friskay and went to live with a married daughter at Gesto on Skye. Leaving aside the traditional disdain of the warrior of noble blood for the more menial work associated with land and stock, Donald turned to commerce. He became the first man from Skye to drive a herd of cattle to the marts of Crieff and Falkirk. The warrior was now a drover and cattle-dealer, working from his son-in-law's house.

Only after a barbed satirical assault by the bard Iain Lom, criticising the chief for his neglect of a loyal kinsman, did Sir James Mor relent and grant Donald land and a house of his own on the MacDonald lands in Skye. The chosen interest of the old Donald marked the way of Gaeldom's future. But Donald's son-in-law, MacLeod of Gesto, did not approve of this demeaning departure from the old ways which had bonised the youthful Domhnall Mac Iain Mhic Sheumais.

To the end of the century and the end of their days, he caustically referred to the warrior of old by the disparaging epithet, Aireach liath nam bo - 'the grey-haired cattle keeper' .



■ Hill pass, Lairig - which became a drovers' route from Skye through Lochaber to Crieff and Falkirk.

A VISION OF THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Rich in artistic fantasy and legend, Rosslyn Chapel won extra fame by being the focus of a Daguerre Diorama show

Rosslyn Chapel, near Edinburgh, is famed around the world as one of Scotland's most remarkable buildings. Defying the conventional and accepted rules of architecture by its bold and original beauty, it is also a wonder for the aura of mystery that surrounds it and all its legendary associations.

One of them is the local legend that the night before a Lord of Rosslyn died, the chapel appeared to be in flames – without sustaining any damage. This superstition, as with so many others, takes its origin from the pen of Sir Walter Scott who, in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, recounts in poetic tones how the chapel seemed to be on fire when a death drew near for a member of the St Clair family.

*Seem'd all on fire that chapel proud,
Where Rosslyn's chiefs uncoffin'd lie,
Each baron, for a subtle shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply
Seem'd all on fire within, around
Deep sacristy and altars pale
Shone every pillar foliage bound,
And glimmer'd all the dead men's mail
Blaz'd battlement, and pinnet high,
Blaz'd every rose-carved buttress fair
So still they blaze, when fate is nigh.
The lordly line of high St Clair.*

A later text by Robert William Billings, in *The Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities of Scotland* (1845), gives us a logical explanation for this eerie effect. Billings explains how he was



Bathed in golden light: the architecturally adventurous 15th-century Rosslyn Chapel pictured from the south.

rendered speechless by the appearance, through the branches of the trees, of "what seemed a row of brick-red smokeless furnaces, but which was only a fine setting sun shining straight through the double windows of the chapel. The phenomenon had a powerful effect on the vision; but it was more that of ignition than of sunlight, from the rich red which often attends Scottish sunsets.

"It is probably then that this remarkable supernatural effect was determined by the position of the building the most appropriate that could be chosen, had its builder desired to produce this effect."

Although the chapel is located halfway down the side of a hill, there are no obstacles to interrupt the lowest rays of the setting sun. It was the emotional quality suggested by the combination of phantasmagorical light effects and rich architectural forms – and the

events of which they were supposed to be a testimony – which determined the enormous success of the chapel and transformed Rosslyn and its surroundings into one of the most important tourist attractions in 19th-century Scotland.

The building of the chapel was begun in 1446 by William St Clair, Prince of Orkney, according to the *Genealogie of the Saint Claires of Rosslyn* (1835) compiled by the Rev Richard Augustin Hay. In this late Medieval society, he appears to have acted as an unusually enlightened employer for those working on the chapel, which was intended to combine a collegiate establishment with a place of interment for himself and his successors.

St Clair is said to have assembled together skilful workmen from all parts, and to have rewarded their work 'generously and with a

munificence well calculated to give energy to their operations'.

As the building is evidently incomplete, and as there is no record of the demolition of any part of it, it is probable that work was stopped on the death of the earl in 1471. At that time only the choir and the east end was finished, and the transept existed simply as an external wall. Once stopped, the work was never

The whole building is remarkable for the peculiarities of its style, and for the richness of its ornament which once led commentators, quite incorrectly, to imagine that the unique nature of the design, indicated it had been built by foreign masons.

The entire ceiling, the bosses of the vault, the capitals and the architraves – indeed, it seems, the whole interior – are covered with sculptures representing flowers, leaves, passages of sacred history,



■ Daguerre was inspired by Delacour's Perspective View of the chapel.

texts of scripture and grotesque figures, all executed with astonishing neatness. The effect is rich and bizarre.

At the south-east angle of the chapel, one pier stands out from the rest. The Apprentice's Pillar is a column wreathed with ascending spirals of foliage. Its associated legend tells of an apprentice who proved more skilled than Rosslyn's master-mason, who because he was unable to execute the design of this pier from the plans he was given

had to go to Rome to sketch a similar one there. On his return, he found his apprentice had finished the work. Instead of being delighted, the mason was so overcome by jealousy he killed the boy with a hammer blow and was later hanged for it.

John Britton's historical exegesis of Rosslyn Chapel, published in *The Architectural Antiquities of Great Britain* (1812), dwelt on the building's anachronistic style, which he thought was manifest in its unclassifiable combination of overcharged ornament and primitive solidity. He also discussed the Masonic lore surrounding the building: the master-mason reputedly murdering his apprentice, and the lineage of the Lords of Rosslyn in Scottish Freemasonry.

According to Britton, the chapel was certainly calculated to amaze the illiterate, and intimidate the weak. It also appears that, long before he was famed for his experiments with photography and the daguerreotype, Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre (1789-1851) took this statement literally when contriving the construction of his Diorama of Rosslyn Chapel. Daguerre believed the chapel, with its phantasmagorical effects, offered an ideal scene subject for a dioramic illusion and that the

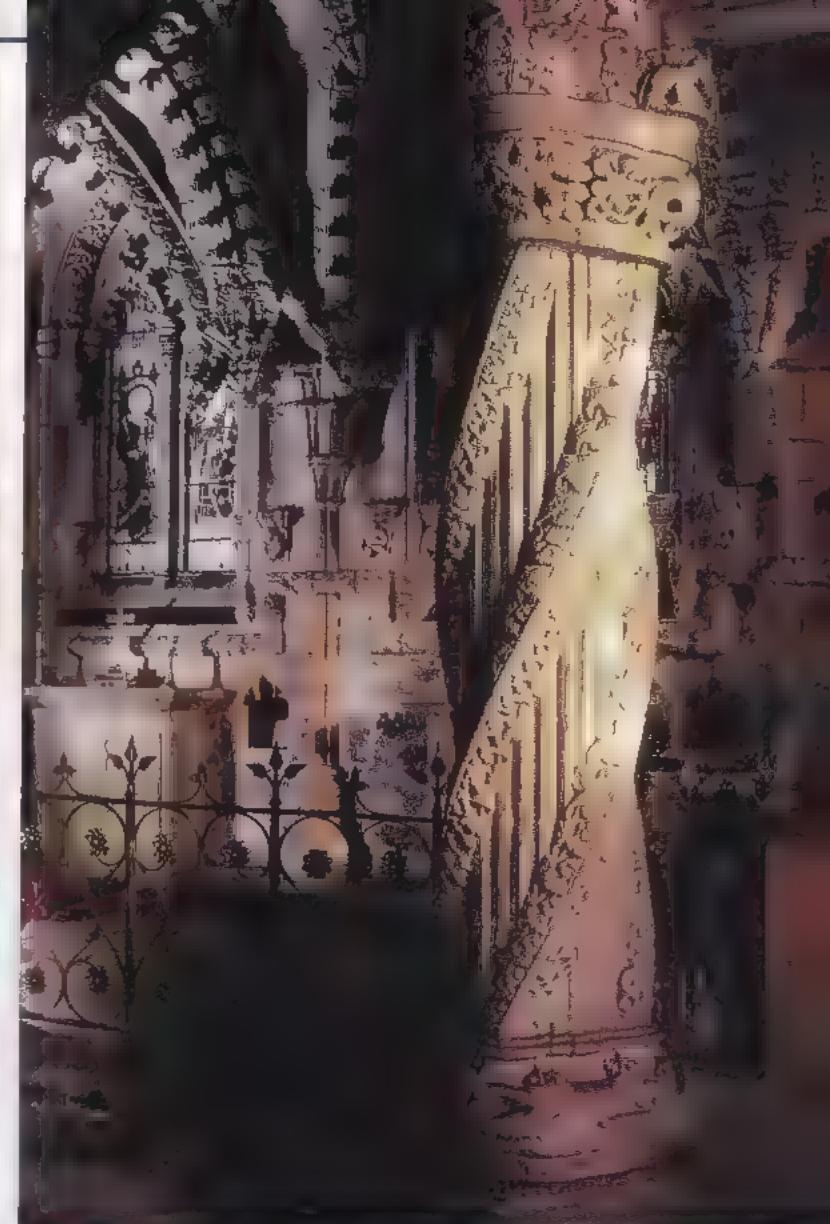
legend linked to the chapel would be sure to attract large numbers of visitors. This dramatic Diorama of the interior of Rosslyn Chapel was exhibited by Daguerre at Paris from September 24, 1824, until February 1825, and in London from February 20, 1826. The Diorama was presented to the public in what was a popular new medium. The scenes were depicted by colour applied to a large transparent screen, lit from a variety of sources. One of the Diorama's essential features was how the pictures remained static, while the auditorium, a cylindrical room, was revolved from one picture to another.

The following was one of the enthusiastic comments on the extraordinary effects of the scene:

"The view of Rosslyn Chapel was painted by Daguerre, and surpasses every representation of an architectural structure we ever saw. A Scotchman would drop on his knees before it, and no person would believe that the variety of light and shade – the management of the rays of the sun reflected through a half opened door, the cobweb tinge of the window, the beam of timber and the loose cord, together with the mixture of light and shade which it displays are mere effect of art, yet such is the case, and we are sure it requires no prophetic ken to say, that Rosslyn Chapel will be one of the most attractive features of the most fascinating exhibition ever opened in London within our knowledge."

What caused most amazement and interest was the extraordinary illusion and brilliant illumination of the show: the building, flooded by intense sunlight, appeared suddenly in the dark hall – accompanied by an ancient Scottish tune on bagpipes.

It is doubtful whether Daguerre



■ The Apprentice's Pillar: did it drive the master-mason to kill its maker?

ever visited Scotland, and if he did not, the question arises: How he could paint and create a Diorama from Rosslyn Chapel? How could he arouse such enthusiasm in his London audience, without ever having made an on-the-spot drawing of it?

It seems likely that he was well acquainted with a series of drawings executed in 1761 by the French painter and scenographer William Delacour, Master of the Trustees' Academy, the newly-established forerunner of Edinburgh art college. A comparison between Delacour's Perspective View of the Inside of Rosslyn Chapel and the view of Rosslyn Chapel exhibited at the Diorama, reveals an extraordinary resemblance. Indeed, one is based on the other and thus proves that Daguerre knew Delacour's view and made use of it for his own representation.

But the artistic transformation he realised on the basis of Delacour's graphic work contributed unmeasurably to the image of the

place. The exercise, being addressed to a mass audience, had the important effect of arousing wide curiosity about the place.

The intricate and mysterious decoration, together with the poetic manipulation of the masonry which is Rosslyn Chapel in its very essence, is celebrated by Daguerre – in an imaginary and transfigured fashion as a work of supreme art in which the artist can exhibit and explore to the full his particular interests as revolutionary scene-painter. His interpretations are not limited simply to its physical representation but equally are intended to invest the monument with new and unexpected meanings.

With these dynamic and allusive images, the remarkable vision of Rosslyn Chapel, in all its light effects, attractive power and artistic licence, is set out as an architectural creation which, from its very origins, must be considered as existing and extending beyond the bounds of any actual or limited reality.

How Livingstone lit up the 'Dark Continent'



■ That famous moment in 1871 when Henry Morton Stanley (left) found the great explorer and spoke the immortal words: 'Dr Livingstone, I presume?'

He was a man with a mission – to take God's word to Africa. In the process, he became a great explorer and fighter of the slave trade

He was one of the greatest explorers who ever lived – an adventurous Scotsman who opened up the heart of Africa. David Livingstone's achievements were so immense that his name will live forever as one of the greatest and bravest geographical pioneers in history

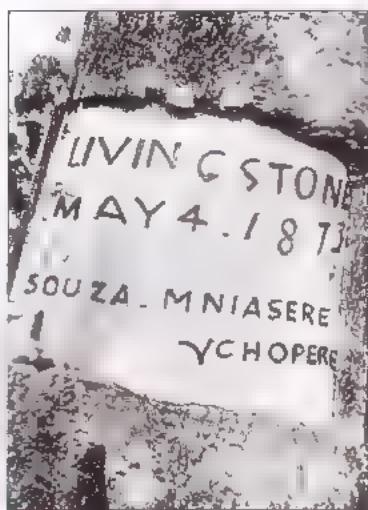
But he was much more than just an explorer; he was also a missionary who believed his work glorified God as much as man. He treated African natives with dignity and compassion and helped to end the slave trade. In doing so, he generated a love and respect for his name among all people which has lasted to this day.

David Livingstone was a man of

humble beginnings, born in a tenement in Blantyre, Lanarkshire, on March 19, 1813. He finished his formal education at the age of ten and went to work in a local cotton mill. But his superiors were astonished to discover that he continued to study while working 14 hours a day at his loom.

Some of the books he read while toiling in the mill were by the great German missionary Karl Gutzatt, who believed that missionaries who travelled abroad to explore new lands should have a medical education, equipping them to carry out all kinds of useful work in their travels.

His example inspired Livingstone, and the young Scotsman became determined to further his education



■ His heart was left in Africa, buried under this carved Zambian tree.



■ Livingstone: born in a Blantyre tenement, he became one of the greatest explorers in history.

and become a missionary himself. He left the mill and, at 23, went to Anderson's College in Glasgow, where he studied medicine, Greek and theology.

His next move was to join the London Missionary Society. Hoping to be sent to China, which fascinated him, he was disappointed to be sent to Africa instead. But when he arrived at Cape Town in 1841, it was the beginning of a series of epic journeys which were to consume him for the rest of his life.

One of the first things he did on arriving in the still 'Dark Continent' was to marry Mary Moffat, daughter of the missionary Robert Moffat. He then travelled north to Robert Moffat's mission in Bechuanaland, where he found natives to help convert the locals to Christianity.

It was here he had his first encounter with the risks of Africa – he was mauled by a lion and, while lucky enough to escape, the wound troubled him for as long as he lived.

It was at this time that he undertook the first of his great explorations. Joined by his fellow explorer William Oswell, he headed north through the Kalahari Desert to discover Lake Ngami.

After this, he travelled west to the Atlantic coast at Luanda, and then

made a great journey back eastwards along the Zambezi River until he finally reached the Indian Ocean.

During this epic journey, he came across the magnificent Victoria Falls for the first time. The journey also had more than its share of perils – Livingstone nearly died of fever, and also made observational errors which led him to conclude that the Zambezi was navigable right into the heart of Africa. Unfortunately, it wasn't, though he led the Foreign Office to believe that it was when he finally returned to Britain in 1856.

But the journey gathered a huge amount of useful information about Africa, and Livingstone's efforts won him a medal from the Royal Geographical Society.

Two years later, he returned to Africa for another great expedition. He went back to the Zambezi and discovered Lake Nyasa. Unfortunately, his work also had an unexpected but highly detrimental effect – in opening up Africa, he began to make it accessible to Portuguese slave traders.

There were personal tragedies, too. His wife had been determined to join him on the expedition, but she



■ Humble beginnings: the explorer's birth-house in Blantyre, Lanarkshire.

fell ill and died in 1862. Another member of the expedition, Bishop C F Mackenzie, also died.

The expedition was eventually recalled in 1863, and his trip back to civilisation was as remarkable as his exploration of Africa's interior. He managed to navigate a small steamer all the way to Bombay, using sails for much of the journey.

In 1866, he made his third and final journey to the African Continent. He hoped to collect information on the river systems of East Central Africa and to settle a dispute over where the watershed of the continent was and the source of the Nile.

He started from Zanzibar and travelled west, but the trip was arduous and the obstacles tough. He discovered Lakes Mweru and Bangweulu, but his health started to fail and again he suffered navigational difficulties. He found what he thought was the Nile – in fact, it was the Congo – and, with his illness getting worse, he travelled to Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika.

It was there in 1871 that the Welsh-American journalist and fellow adventurer Henry Morton Stanley, who led one of four

expeditions which had set out to find him, finally met up with him and greeted him with the famous words

"Dr Livingstone, I presume?"

Livingstone was determined to solve the problem of the source of the Nile, and returned to the task when he felt better. Seeing how ill he was, his colleagues attempted to persuade him to leave Africa, but he would have none of it. One reason he was

determined to stay was that he was a strong opponent of the slave trade: he once released more than 150 slaves by holding their captors at gunpoint while they escaped – and wanted to do what he could to stop it.

Ironically, as his final journey forced him back into illness, he had to accept help from Arab slave traders. It was becoming increasingly clear that he could not hold out for much longer.

On May 1, 1873, Livingstone was found dead as if praying on his knees at Chitambo in present-day Zambia. His followers reverently took his heart out and buried it locally, while embalming his body for the long return trip to Britain.

They then made a remarkable 1,500 mile trek across the continent, carrying the body to the coast. It was placed on a ship and returned to Britain, where the following year it was buried with full honours at Westminster Abbey.

Livingstone's courage was huge, and his memory lives to this day. He was probably a better explorer than he was a missionary, but his achievements in opening up Africa were remarkable.

He proved that the white man could not just settle in Africa, but also earn great affection.

Livingstone's focus on the slave trade attracted attention, and he did enough on that front to force the British government into stopping the sale of slaves at Zanzibar.

Livingstone was not just a great Scot – he was one of the greatest Victorians who ever lived, and his contribution to a better understanding of one of the world's most unexplored continents was immense.

Blantyre and Scotland may claim him, but his memory belongs to all the world – though most dearly, of course, to Africa. ■



Who fired the bullet that killed this man?

As a keen champion of independence fighters – not least the more zealous of Scottish nationalists – William McRae made many enemies. Did the brilliant lawyer pay for his passion with his life?

Once he got his teeth into a target, William McRae would never let go. He was a clever, superbly articulate lawyer and one of the Scottish National Party's most memorable characters. But his devastating frankness made him no friend of certain sections of the UK establishment against which he railed for much of his richly-textured bachelor life.

On the night of Friday, April 5, 1985 – or perhaps early the next morning – that 61-year old life abruptly met the beginning of its mysterious end at a bleak and lonely place on the A87 Invergarry to Kyle of Lochalsh road, one of the few spots in rural Inverness-shire that is more sinister than picturesque.

The narrow road on which he had been driving to his holiday croft near Loch Duich, Ross-shire, plunges down on the left through dry brown heather and scree to the faraway shore of Loch Loyne. And one way or another, this evil road claimed William McRae in what at first looked like an unlucky accident.

The next morning, with most of his journey behind him, his damaged Volvo was found about 70 yards off the road, down the rough incline facing the loch – by a passing Australian tourist who flagged down the first car that came along. As fate would have it, the driver was another SNP member, Dundee councillor David Coutts – going to Skye for a family holiday – who was shocked to recognise Mr McRae in his driving seat, unconscious but still hanging on to life, with bloody head injuries.

He was rushed to hospital in Inverness then transferred to

Aberdeen, where he died early the next morning.

And that might simply have been that. But two weeks later the bombshell burst – when it was officially disclosed that his death had been caused by a .22 bullet wound to the head.

The first assumption by the authorities and the public was that the fatal wound must have been self-inflicted – despite his friends' protestations that such a man would never contemplate such a thing.

Even stranger, the twice-fired gun was found by police in a stream some 20 yards away from what must have been the scene of the shooting.

Indeed, with the emergence of each new revelation, doubt and suspicion grew ever deeper, making official explanations increasingly difficult to accept. Eventually, there seemed to be too many anomalies for the media and public to settle for suicide.

Mr McRae had been shot above the right ear, but there were no burns around the wound consistent with close-range self-infliction. And another disturbing observation was made by Councillor Coutts who recalled that, when he came upon the scene, he found it "peculiar" that Mr McRae's watch, cheque cards and other personal effects were some way away from the car. "A lot of things had been ripped up," he said.

The car's back window had been smashed too, and the ignition and door keys found on the dying man's lap. Also puzzling was the absence of the victim's briefcase and files which he was known to have taken with him – they appeared to have vanished without trace.

But most bewildering of all was



■ William McRae, whose death was at first assumed to be accidental.

the matter of the 'thrown-away' gun.

Whose hand had created these inconsistencies and disturbances? It is hard to believe that, if he had shot himself in the head, William McRae would have been able to lob the weapon 20 yards from the car in which he sat fatally wounded. So had a ransacking vandal come upon the tragic scene and tried to profit from it? Or could the death have been delivered by the sinister hand of a professional hitman?

There was, after all, no shortage of hostile feeling towards McRae and his works. There were even, it was said, low-lying enemies with vengeful

intent. As one of the many other causes he championed, he had been a bold campaigner in international circles for Scotland's own constitutional rights.

It was also said that he had close connections with militant nationalist groups. So was someone, some agency, trying to remove this thorn in the flesh once and for all?

One suspicious sign was the mystery of a fire at his house on the day before he died. Another was the very date of his fatal 'accident' – was it merely a coincidence that April 6 was Scottish Independence Day, the anniversary of the 1320 Declaration



■ Remembered: Friends and admirers now gather every year at the cairn marking the spot where McRae crashed as he drove along the perilous A87.

of Arbroath? The questions are easy to pose, the answers harder to come by.

To the key questions, for example – who would want to silence William McRae and why? – there are too many possible answers with very little beyond the circumstantial to support them; a plethora of hypotheses ranging from simplistic through plain foggy to utterly fanciful.

In rising degrees of complexity, starting with supposed justifications for suicide, they included:

□ Worries over being blackmailed and/or fear of pending prosecution for a driving offence had made him fatally depressed;

□ He had become the target of west-coast drugs traffickers against whom he had been campaigning;

□ Supporters of a proposed new reprocessing plant at Dounreay wanted his powerfully-persuasive 'anti' voice to be silenced;

□ He was an 'enemy of the state' because he was too close to the bellicose nationalist militants; and finally...

□ A correspondent to *The Scotsman* suggested that the lawyer could also have been seen as an enemy of the state for more historical reasons. Alan Clayton

wrote that, while McRae was with the British Army in India between 1945 and 1947, he maintained a clandestine contact with the Indian National Congress "and it was due to this 'early warning system' that an illegal and peripatetic liberation radio station operating around New Delhi was able to stay one step ahead of the British Army during the liberation struggle. Such activity, of course, rendered him liable to the firing squad. British security was unable to prove these activities, but neither did it forgive or forget..."

Although much of this kind of theorising went on two or three years after the incident, nagging questions had already arisen within months of it and, to try to set them at rest, pressure mounted for a fatal accident inquiry. The Solicitor General eventually agreed that if there were any real degree of public concern about the circumstances of the death, he would be "prepared to consider" an inquiry.

But to the astonishment of the many interested parties, the Crown Office announced a little over two weeks later – about three months after McRae's death – that there was to be no inquiry. Its statement said a

full report on the death had been considered and Crown counsel were satisfied there were no circumstances to warrant it.

Even an attempt by the SNP to set up its own investigation – headed by its respected stateswoman Winnie Ewing, a lawyer herself and Euro-MP for the Highlands and Islands – ran into the sand almost two years later.

After her attempts to get to the papers and facts were bluntly rebuffed by the Crown Office, Mrs Ewing made no further comment on the case – prompting some of the more-zealous nationalist circles to suggest that she had learned something, somehow, in the course of her approaches that had had the effect of cooling their intensity.

The inevitable elaboration was to allege that – militancy being seen by voters as a negative factor in a party's electability – McRae had been disowned by the SNP hierarchy for the same reason that he had been silenced by the security forces: that he was too close to those prepared to fight for their cause with force.

Whatever the reason, the party's perceived retirement from the ring was a big disappointment to many of its strongest supporters – and some

vowed to keep the McRae flame alight in a less official but more passionate way... more in keeping, perhaps, with the individual campaigning spirit of the man.

To pay their respects and express their anger at what they saw as the inaction of the authorities, these friends and admirers got the protest show on the road again – literally. On the A87 road where the Volvo had originally come to grief, they began an annual tradition of visiting the site of the incident – now marked with a cairn of rocks from various parts of Scotland – and speaking their minds into the biting wind.

It is not uncommon, of course, for those who hold strong political views to find their way through often-imaginary mazes to the kind of conclusion that others would consider unlikely at best. But, perhaps paradoxically, such exotic plants grow best on the thinnest of informational grounds. And there is no doubt that in this case more official enlightenment would have led to less public suspicion.

Ironically, the man best suited to blasting open such a case would have been the sharp and colourful William McRae himself. ●

WHERE OUR HISTORY HANGS IN THE AIR



The past is ever-present in fabulous buildings of antiquity in and around the capital, says biker historian David Ross

Rosslyn Chapel stands in the village of Rosslyn, and is signposted from the village's main thoroughfare. Rosslyn itself is only a few minutes' drive south from the Edinburgh city by-pass.

The ornamentation inside the chapel is staggering, and although it is today covered in a wash of what looks like white plaster, originally it would have been painted in vivid colours. A carved face within is pointed out as being a copy of the death mask of King Robert Bruce, and this claim is a possibility as the face shows the same wounding as is apparent on the cast of Bruce's skull, which was made after the opening of his tomb in Dunfermline in 1819.

Rosslyn is currently very much in vogue as several recent books have made a point of featuring legends surrounding this building, but I have to say some of the claims are 'fabulous' indeed, and many facts seem to have been bent to fit the theory. This should not detract from the jewel that the chapel undoubtedly is, and there is much here to impress the visitor.

If you do visit Rosslyn Chapel, don't miss the nearby Rosslyn Castle, which stands in a stupendous setting, high above Rosslyn Glen. From the chapel, go down the path to the graveyard, then turn sharp left, following the track to the castle. There is later work within the ruins of the Medieval castle, which is today a private house – so privacy should be respected – but you can walk on to the old drawbridge with its low walls and look over at the long drop on either side.

At sites like this I marvel at the tenacity of the original builders – how long did they take to get huge stone blocks into place in such a perilous position?

One mistake would have had them plummeting to certain death. Perhaps there was a Medieval version of Health and Safety at Work that insisted on stringent regulations!

Just before the drawbridge section a path leads down to the right towards



■ Carved face, based on Robert Bruce's death mask, to be seen at Rosslyn Chapel.

the floor of the glen, where you can admire the castle from below, and see the chapel sitting higher up the hillside. You realise how impregnable such a site must have been in the days before artillery.

A battle was fought against the English invaders in this vicinity in Wallace's time, where three separate enemy forces were defeated in one day.

Turning to the Covenant, one of the main sites connected with its turbulent times stands in the heart of our capital city – St Giles Cathedral, on your right as you walk down the Royal Mile from Edinburgh Castle. It was here in St Giles that Jenny Geddes was said to have shouted: "Ye'll no' read the mass in my lug!" – and threw her stool at Dean Hannay as he read from the service

book. Popular myth has it that this helped spark the events leading to the Covenant being drawn up.

St Giles is open to the public, and it has on display one of the copies of the original Covenant.

It is a fabulous place to visit, and has that certain aura of peace that only establishments of great antiquity can evoke. It is as if the air is heavy with the presence of historical events which have taken place within these walls.

A church has stood on this site since 854 AD.

St Giles is open to the public at most times, and for a while you can escape the city's bustle and bask in some of its ancient glories. The Thistle Chapel in particular has some fine wood-carving that should not be missed. ■

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Engraving, Signing: Mansell; The Battle of Marston Moor by John Barker: Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museums, Gloucester. p14/15 The Last Sleep of the Earl of Argyll, by E.M. Ward: City Art Gallery, Salford; Duke of Argyll: SNPG; Tomb: Great Scot; Canongate Tolbooth: EPL, Fife. p16/17/18/19 Historic Scotland. p20/21/22/23 Highland Pictures: Ray Burnett, p24/25 Rosslyn Chapel: Angelo Maggi.

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SCOTLAND'S STORY

NEXT WEEK IN PART 23



MONTROSE: A REAL MILITARY GENIUS

James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, was a poet and soldier with extraordinary qualities of leadership. A contemporary historian wrote of him: 'He is perhaps the most brilliant natural military genius disclosed by the Civil War.' Montrose's qualities were not always at the disposal of the Scottish Covenanters, however, and when he changed sides, King Charles I acquired a formidable winner of battles.

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Wherever you live, Millennium Festival events invite you to take part, have fun and join together to celebrate the year 2000.

For details of Millennium Festival events in Scotland visit www.millenniumscotland.co.uk or call our Scottish office on 01259 219 905

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